March 1st 1863

"No 4"

Camps Gills near Murfreesboro Tenn
Head Quarters D. M. Dept 75th Ills Vol
1st Brigade 1st Division
20th Army Corps
Army of the Cumberland

Ever dear Lydia

Again I am permitted to write you a few lines, and I have the pleasure of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 19th written just after you had been to the Irish dance you did not enjoy it very well, did you? I thought you would not, knowing your disposition and feelings about that class of people, but I am glad you went if it caused the evening to pass away any more pleasant, and I want you to go to all places of amusement when you can. for I know that you have a lonesome time of it

I am rather sorry that I done said so much against your going to Dixon. for I realy want you to stay just where you can enjoy yourself

the best, and just where you can feel the most at home,- If I were to consult my own heart felt wishes, I should try and get home, my heart says fly to you- I long to see you,- to receive one pure, holy kiss, from the lips of my dearly loved wife, to press her one more to my heart, but my duty to my country, forbids this pleasure for the present,- I say duty, for, humble as my position is or may be, I consider it my duty in common with every other recipient of the blessings we have enjoyed as a nation, to be engaged in in its full, firm, and earnest defense

There are other motives, to keep me here, I have an honest pride in the 7th, I have been well used by her officers, and men, and there has seemed to be a confidence felt in my abilities, and also in view of the honorable prospects before me, I feel like staying with them and sharing their fate, so long as my as my health will permit, while at the same time I realize that I have duties to perform to my wife, which I shall not neglect, of my own free will, and paramount to all others I realize it to be my duty to so conduct myself as not to disgrace the good and true woman I have left alone,- for my disgrace is yours- but rather to live up to the manhood within me, and take back to you a name and a character unsullied

and at least with the commendations of my superiors — I do not mean to come back to you a worse man in habit or character, than what I was when I left you, and I may be a better one, — I know that my thoughts and feelings towards you, dearest Lydia, are different from what they were; I am conscious of a pure, sacred love, that is deep and abiding, that calls upon me to lift myself, to a standpoint of moral purity equal to the object of my love, and thereby renders myself worthy of a full return
My natural thought, Lydia, are refined and elevating, and in my soul, I loathe meanness and dissipation, and now associates with a person equal to yourself, but I have been a weak foolish man, and have caused you a great deal of unhappiness and sorrow, for all of which I ask your forgiveness; with the determination in the future to choose a path through life, that will command the respect, the honor and love of my dearly beloved Wife, — and happy, thrice happy the day when my wife can look up to me and say, "this is my husband, in whom I have full confidence, and of whom I am proud," — Methinks the sublime happiness of that one hour, would repay a life time of exertion and denial, — I see all this, now and feel that I have been dead, and it is with

sorrow that I think of the years of happiness I have squandered foolishly, but let us hope that these lessons will cause me to begin life anew with right understandings.
Have I wearied you with this talk? - I think not

I mailed to day a long letter to Ephraim & Emily and I gave him my views of the war policy and of the stand he has taken in terms that could not be misunderstood, - I am surprised at the position he has taken and I predict that the time will come when he will be ashamed of it
We have been expecting our pay for more than a month but it does not come, and when we do get it, it will be only two months, but the paymaster assures us that it will all be paid up to the first of march, within thirty days. - we will try and believe it when we get it
In your last letter but one you say that you are going to Dixon in a few days but in your last you say nothing about it but I shall send this to Dixon, - The trees are beneding out and the grass is green, and I saw some of the boys come in with a bunch of flowers, and the robins and blue birds are migrating north surely Spring is coming, - it is warm but awful rainy and muddy - it is now bed time and I will close with this sheet, - write often, and write freely - your letters are worth to me ten times what you think they are - retire this with the love of